

MINUTES OF THE
MAG 9-1-1 OVERSIGHT TEAM MEETING

October 23, 2003
MAG Office Building, Cholla Room
Phoenix, Arizona

MEMBERS ATTENDING

Harry Beck, Mesa Fire Department, Chair	Helen Gandara-Zavala, Scottsdale Police Dept.
*Jim Gibson, Glendale Fire Department	Jay Spradling, Tempe Police Department
Steve Werner, Maricopa County Sheriff's Office	*Lawrence Rodriguez, Tolleson Police Dept.
*Mike Fusco, Emergency Management, Peoria	Vacant: Phoenix Fire Department
Blake McClelland, Phoenix Police Department	

* Those members neither present nor represented by proxy.

Attended by videoconference or by telephone conference call.

OTHERS PRESENT

Mike Benjamin, Phoenix Fire Department	Liz Hunt, Phoenix Fire Department
Valerie Day, MAG	Susan MacFarlane, Phoenix Fire Department
Mary Dysinger-Franklin, Phoenix Fire Dept.	Tom Melton, Scottsdale Police Department
Dave Eaton, Phoenix Fire Department	Tom Remes, MAG
Dave Faulkner, Phoenix Police Department	Linda Velazquez, Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Harry Beck, Mesa, at 2:00 p.m.

4. Introduction of the 911 CENS Program Manager and the 911 Technical Manager

This agenda item was taken out of order.

Liz Hunt, the Community Emergency Notification System (CENS) Manager, and Mike Benjamin, the 911 Technical Manager, were introduced.

2. Call to the Audience

An opportunity was provided to members of the public to address the Committee on 911 issues, or any of the items listed on the agenda. Citizens will be requested not to exceed a three minute time period for their comments. Chairman Beck noted that no public comment cards had been turned in.

3. Approval of the May 6, 2003 Meeting Minutes

Chairman Beck asked if members had any changes to the minutes. Hearing none, Chairman Beck asked for a motion to approve. Ms. Gandara-Zavala moved to approve the minutes of the May 6, 2003 meeting. Mr. McClelland seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Community Emergency Notification System Policies

In January 2003, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) awarded a \$2.5 million contract to MAG to develop and operate a Community Emergency Notification System (CENS) for Maricopa County. A CENS Stakeholder Working Group was formed to ensure all interested parties had a voice in setting the policies. Representatives from the State, County, Towns and Cities in the fields of Public Safety, Flood Control, Homeland Security, Animal Control, Emergency Management, Communications, Transportation and ITS participated on the Stakeholders Working Group. After three meetings, the Working Group reached consensus on policies for consideration by the Oversight Team. The Working Group also supported the creation of a subgroup that would provide oversight of the CENS program and report back to the Working Group after the first year.

Ms. Hunt stated that the Working Group extensively discussed whether or not an agency would be charged the cost of activating the system. She explained that a one minute activation would cost 46 cents per completed call per telephone. Ms. Hunt gave as an example a call to 1,000 homes would cost \$460. Ms. Hunt stated that the Stakeholders agreed that emergency activation charges will be fully funded through CENS program funds for the first year of system operation. After the first year of operation, the activating agency will pay the activation charges. She stated that this concept of an agency paying for its activation would be reevaluated after the upcoming year.

Ms. Hunt stated that the CENS Stakeholders discussed at length when to activate the system. Originally, the group discussed using different levels for activation. Level one was designated for emergencies and level two for public safety messages. She noted that further investigation discovered some potential conflicts with federal law. Senate Bill 800 addresses the use of location information for emergency services in response to an emergency. This raised the question of what constituted an emergency. Ms. Hunt stated that the Stakeholders agreed that emergency incidents would be defined as imminent threats to life or property, disaster notification, endangered children, endangered elderly, and evacuation notices. Ms. Hunt stated that legal opinion is being sought to provide clarification if the system could be used for non-emergency notifications. Ms. Hunt then reviewed the project timeline that was included in the agenda packet.

Mr. Spradling asked if the subgroup review would be added into the timeline. Ms. Hunt replied that the timeline will probably need to be expanded as more situations arise. Susan MacFarlane noted that it is important to note that the system will be fully operational by January 1, 2004, and will actually be ready for activation at the first testing. In the event of a major catastrophe taking place prior to January 1st, the system could be activated.

Chairman Beck noted that the Public Information Officers will be of great assistance in educating the public. If the public does not understand what to expect, the system will not be effective. Ms. Hunt stated that December 4, 2003 is the target date for the CENS press conference, and is also the date when the public education campaign will begin. Ms. Hunt noted that she anticipates conducting public education on an annual basis.

Chairman Beck stated that the CENS Stakeholders had requested that a subgroup be formed to offer guidance to the Program and report back to the Stakeholders after the first year of operation. He asked the committee for input on the composition of the subgroup.

It was noted that the Stakeholders was a large group and would not be as conducive to working out issues as quickly as a smaller group. Ms. Gandara-Zavala thought that the subgroup was a good idea and its ability to assemble quickly might offer some benefit. The Oversight Team agreed that a subgroup of three representatives would be appropriate.

Mr. Spradling moved to set up a subgroup of three that would offer guidance on the CENS program. Ms. Gandara-Zavala seconded.

Ms. Hunt asked about the inclusion of citizens, which had been discussed by the CENS Stakeholders. Chairman Beck noted the difficulties encountered to find citizens to participate on the Stakeholders Group. He commented that the subgroup would be more administrative-oriented; including citizens in the Stakeholders Group may be more appropriate. Mr. Spradling suggested that citizens could be included in a forum setting. He noted that in addition, the Stakeholders would be reconvened as needed.

Mr. Werner commented that adjustments could take place at a later point after agencies have become comfortable with the system. Ms. MacFarlane commented that outreach at community meetings may be a great forum to get input. Mr. Spradling stated that his community likes to use forums as a vehicle to provide information. Chairman Beck stated that Block Watch groups could be contacted. Ms. Hunt stated that she would implement those suggestions. The more citizens are aware, the more they value the program, thus making it easier to get support for funding. The Oversight Team agreed that Ms. Hunt could convene the subgroup as needed.

A vote taken on the motion passed unanimously. Mr. Spradling, Mr. Werner, and Tom Melton, the Scottsdale PSAP, volunteered to serve on the subgroup.

Chairman Beck noted that a recommendation to the Management Committee was needed on the draft policies submitted by the Stakeholders Working Group. He noted that the Stakeholders agreed that the activation costs would be paid with CENS program funds for the first year. After the first year, activation costs would be paid by the activating agency. Chairman Beck noted that some concern has been noted for the agencies paying the activation costs, and this will be reevaluated after the first year of system operation. He added that it is important to pass the activation fee policy through the MAG process again. Chairman Beck noted that during presentations given to the Management Committee and Regional Council, they were informed that an ongoing funding source will be needed. He stated that the Stakeholders Working Group extensively discussed the definition of an emergency. They pared back the defined list for the time being, deciding that the system would be activated for emergencies only, until legal advice is given. Chairman Beck noted that it may be possible that the system could eventually be used for public safety messages.

Mr. Melton asked for clarification of what a city's share of costs might be after the CENS fund has been depleted. Chairman Beck noted that the principal cost for CENS is for the database. Ms. MacFarlane commented on a future implementation of wireless call routing for MAG 911. She explained that the Mid-America Regional Council has had much success with this option. Ms. MacFarlane noted that 911 staff will be visiting Mid-America Regional Council on November 4th to learn more about its program. She advised that a return on the investment for the cost of the router could be realized in one year.

It was discussed that huge amounts of money are being spent for information to be used for public safety that the MAG 911 system has already purchased. Ms. MacFarlane explained that the Qwest statewide tariff is bundled, and if the tariff is unbundled, Qwest could request an increase in the rates. She advised that this unbundling could impact the rest of the state, and that is why the state 911 administrator has been involved in the issue. Ms. MacFarlane stated that if the region could successfully implement a wireless router, a wireline router could be purchased. By mandate, Qwest would have to come to MAG 911 within 24 hours with the database information. Mr. Melton asked if there was an estimated time frame for implementation. Ms. MacFarlane replied that she would have a better idea after the visit with Mid-America in November. She added that Mid-America has been using its router successfully for one year, and is confident of moving ahead on the wireline router. Mr. Melton asked the cost to PSAPs. Ms. MacFarlane commented that costs are assessed through the MAG assessment at the city level, not at the PSAP level. She noted that the MAG region will be the largest deployed system, and some reductions in costs might be forthcoming. Ms. Gandara-Zavala moved to recommend approval of the policies for the MAG Community Emergency Notification System program, as brought forward by the CENS Stakeholders Working Group.

After discussion, the Oversight Team agreed that the motion would include language that the policies would be reevaluated after the first year of operation.

As maker of the motion, Ms. Gandara-Zavala agreed to amend the motion to recommend approval of the policies for the MAG Community Emergency Notification System program, as brought forward by the CENS Stakeholders Working Group, with the understanding that the policies would be reevaluated after the first year of operation. Mr. Spradling seconded the amended motion.

Chairman Beck called for discussion of the motion.

Mr. Werner stated that the system might be useful to Homeland Security, and could be reimbursed if activated for that purpose.

Mr. Spradling stated that this issue was explained at one of the Stakeholders meetings, where it was mentioned that receiving reimbursement for incidents could take years. Mr. Werner noted that CENS could notify an immediate neighborhood of a missing child, whereas Amber Alert notifications encompass larger geographic areas.

There being no further discussion, a vote taken on the motion passed unanimously.

6. 911 GIS Sharing Agreement

Ms. MacFarlane stated that a GIS mapping project that will provide the location of a wireless 911 caller was recently completed. She stated that MAG is sensitive to cities' feelings about proprietary data. Ms. MacFarlane stated that the 911 office has prepared a 911 GIS sharing agreement to share this data for public safety purposes only. She indicated that the data needs to be built out to the entire region in order to implement Phase I, and eventually Phase II. Ms. MacFarlane noted that the 911 office has been in contact with member agencies and they have been receptive to having a sharing agreement for public safety purposes. She informed the committee that the agreement has been reviewed by the City of Phoenix attorney, but not by the MAG attorney. Ms. MacFarlane stated that

if the Oversight Team delayed taking action to a later date, that would not negatively impact the project.

Chairman Beck stated that the agreement may require additional review to appropriately brief the city managers. He stated that further input from MAG's attorney will be needed, and suggested that bullet points of implications should be prepared for the next Oversight Team meeting. Ms. MacFarlane stated that she would prepare a white paper on the agreement. The Oversight Team agreed to delay action on this item.

7. Transition to Self Maintenance of the 911 Equipment

Mike Benjamin briefed members on the status of the transition to self maintenance. Mr. Benjamin stated that the technical team currently has four staff members, and three additional technicians will be hired in 2004. He stated that self maintenance of the call centers is anticipated in July 2004. Mr. Benjamin explained some of the tasks that will be performed by the team, including training, installation, maintenance, assistance with upgrades, technical support for site moves, site surveys, and implementing a data network to link call centers.

Chairman Beck noted that many of the tasks mentioned by Mr. Benjamin were inadequate or nonexistent in Qwest's service. Self maintenance will put MAG 911 in a stronger position, and as more PSAPs are added, will become increasingly important.

8. Wireless Phase I and II Implementation

Ms. MacFarlane gave an update on the status of implementing Phase I and Phase II in the MAG region. She stated that the Phoenix City Council approved issuing an RFP for a wireless router, as she had mentioned during the CENS policy discussion. Ms. MacFarlane stated that she would give an update at the next Oversight Team meeting, after the trip to Mid-America, when she would have a better idea of deployment.

Ms. MacFarlane stated that the usual practice is to implement Phase I first, then implement Phase II. She said that the City of Phoenix strongly supports the region going directly to Phase II. She noted that with Phase II, the region would also get Phase I abilities. Ms. MacFarlane stated that the idea is to roll out Phase I and Phase II simultaneously. Ms. MacFarlane stated that one vendor has requested that the Arizona 911 fund pay \$24 million for chips in their customers' handsets. She indicated that if this vendor is not deployed, there may be pressure on them to provide the chips. Chairman Beck asked a time frame for deployment. Ms. MacFarlane replied that the goal is to deploy in August 2004.

Mr. Spradling asked if funding would be sufficient for deployment. Ms. MacFarlane explained that there is not much difference in cost to go directly to Phase II deployment. She noted that it is actually more cost effective to deploy Phase I and Phase II simultaneously. Ms. MacFarlane noted there will be funding issues when the tax decreases, in addition to raids of the 911 fund by the legislature.

Mr. Melton asked for clarification of new federal legislation on 911 funds being considered. Ms. MacFarlane explained that there are two federal bills. The Senate bill says that a state that takes money from its 911 fund could not receive grants to deploy. The House bill says Phase I and Phase

It cannot be deployed in states where the 911 fund is raided. Ms. MacFarlane mentioned upcoming meetings with the Arizona Congressional delegation on this issue.

Chairman Beck asked if money could be saved by rolling out the high population areas first, followed by the lower density areas. Ms. MacFarlane replied that she has been finding out that the cost savings would not be substantial, if any. She also mentioned that the cost estimate for the wireless router is approximately the same as what Qwest charges for one year.

Chairman Beck asked Ms. MacFarlane to review the 911 tax reductions for the committee. Ms. MacFarlane stated that the current 37-cent tax decreases to 25 cents in 2006. The tax further decreases in 2007 to 20 cents and remains there. Chairman Beck stated that the 911 fund needs to be protected from being used for other purposes. He stated that a legislative focus needs to be established. Ms. MacFarlane stated that Sandra Junck is working on 911 issues in regard to the legislature. Chairman Beck noted that the use of wireless telephones is increasing. He noted a large increase in cell phone calls to 911 in Mesa.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.